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(54) **FLOW CONTROL ACTUATOR WITH AN ADJUSTABLE FREQUENCY**

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CPC **B64C 21/08** (2013.01); **B64C 21/04** (2013.01); **B64C 2230/04** (2013.01); **B64C 2230/06** (2013.01); **B64C 2230/18** (2013.01); **Y02T 50/166** (2013.01)

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USPC 137/834, 833, 835, 825, 826, 829, 831
See application file for complete search history.

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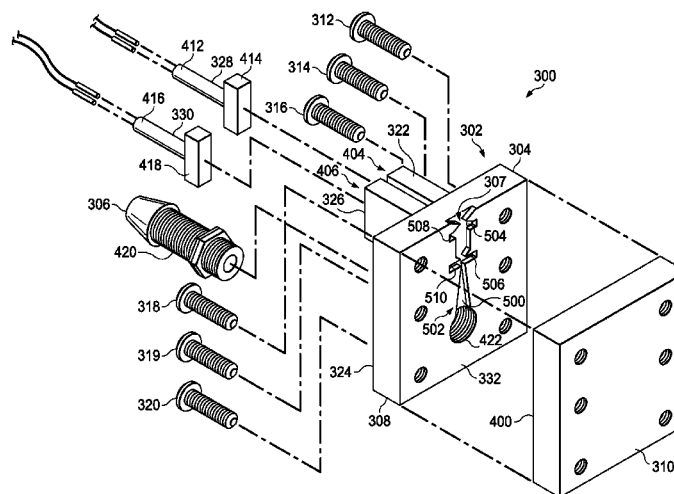
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ABSTRACT

A method and apparatus comprising a structure and a chamber within the structure. The structure has an input port and an output port. The chamber is configured to channel a fluid from the input port to the output port of the structure. A volume of the chamber is configured to change such that a frequency at which the fluid flows out of the output port changes at the output port.

18 Claims, 13 Drawing Sheets



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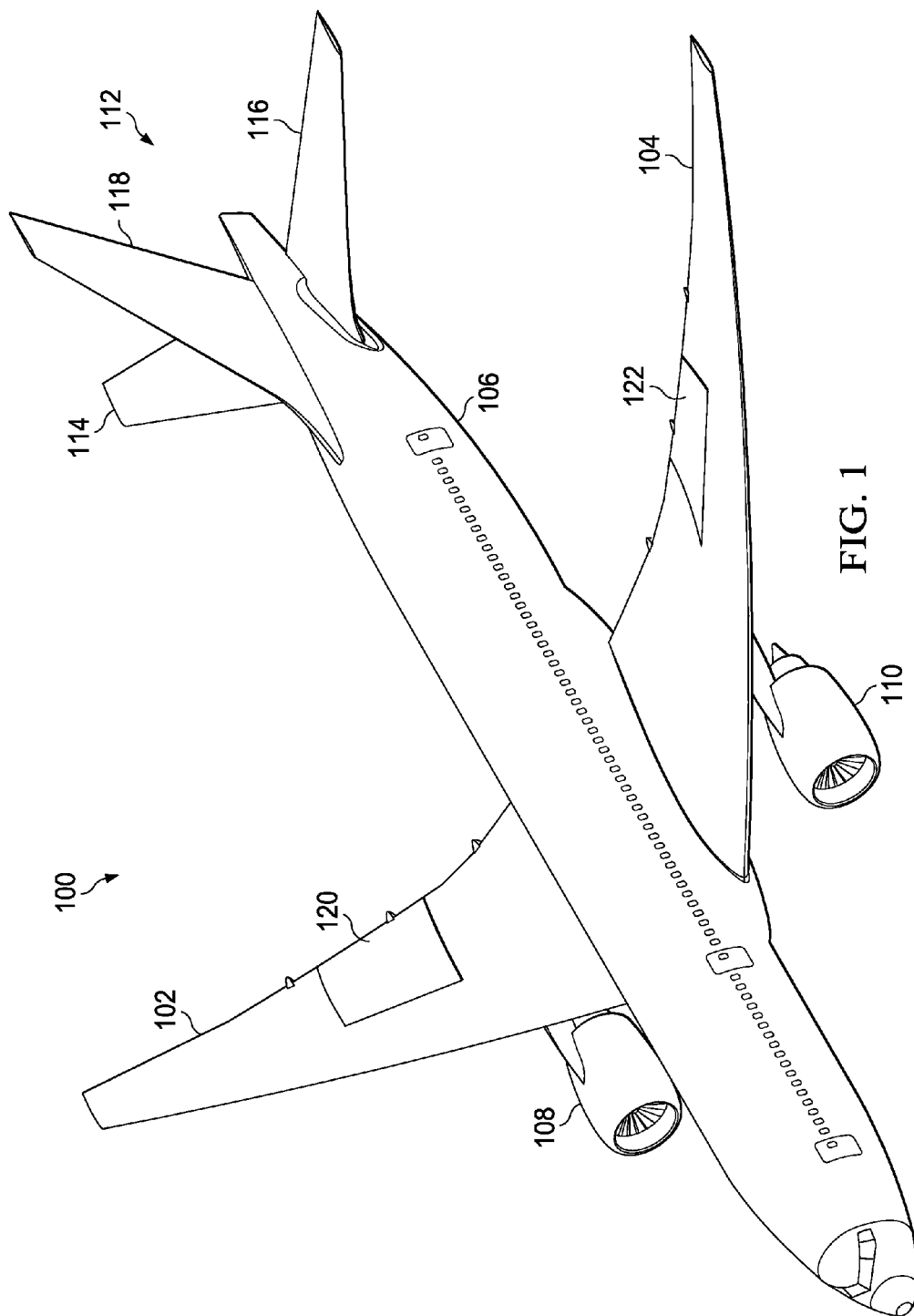
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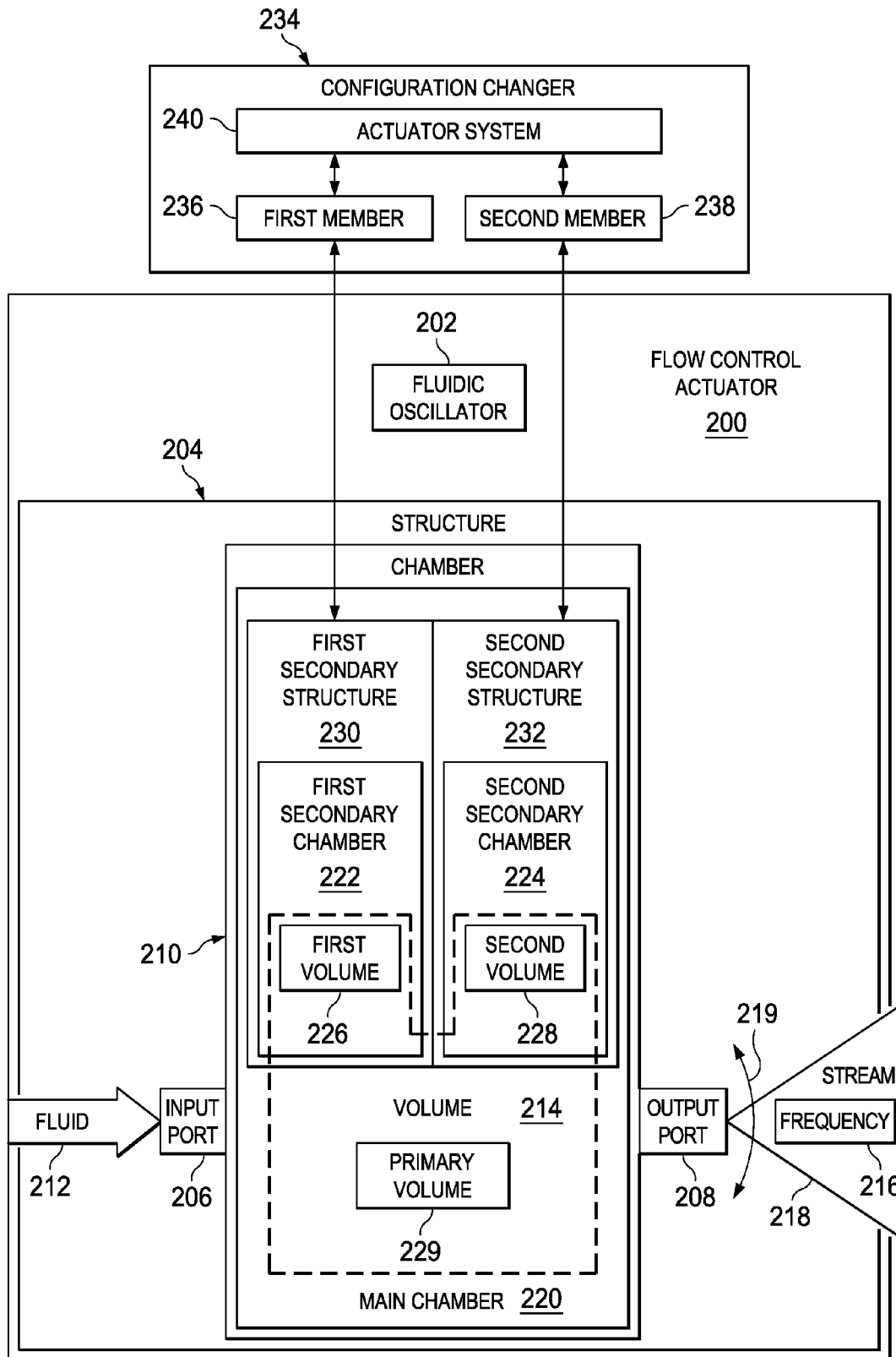
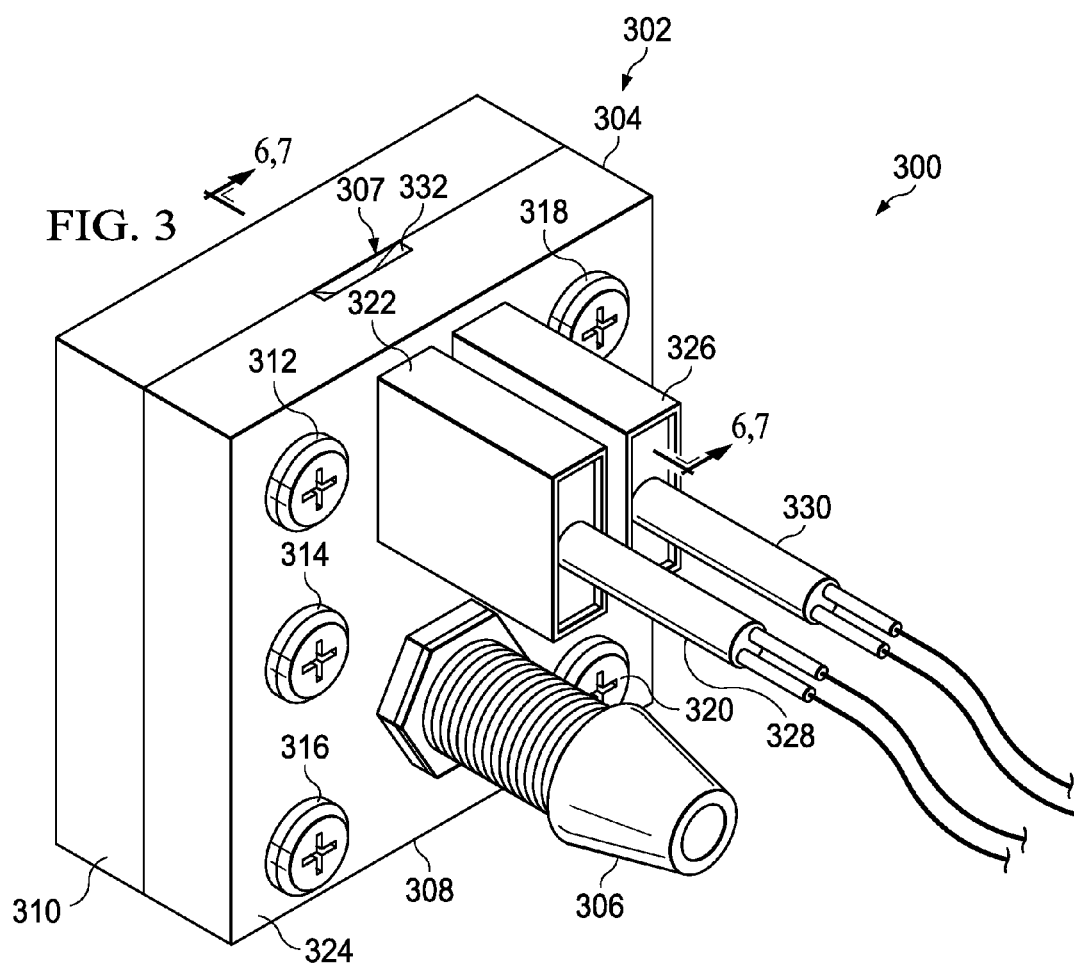
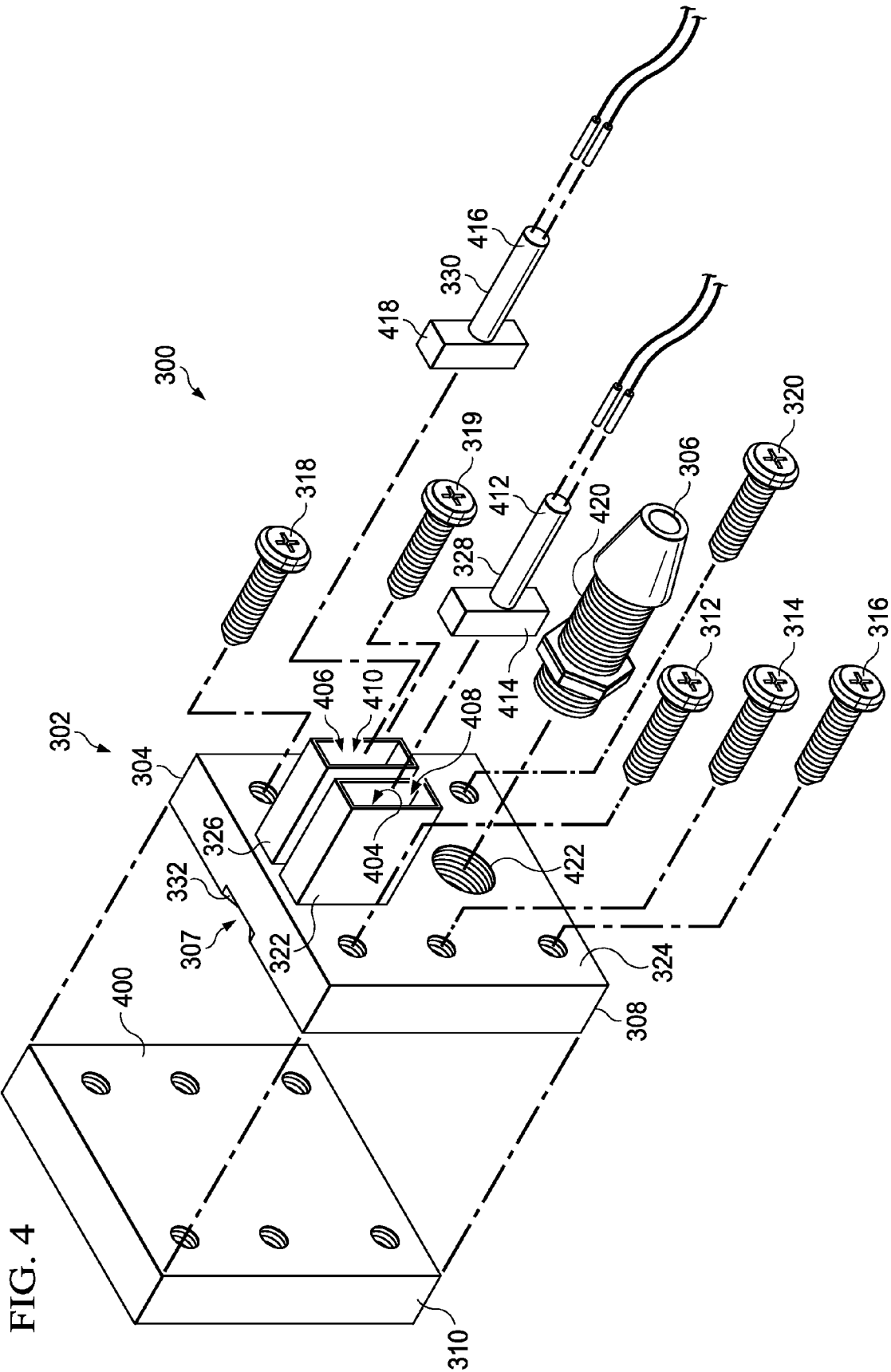
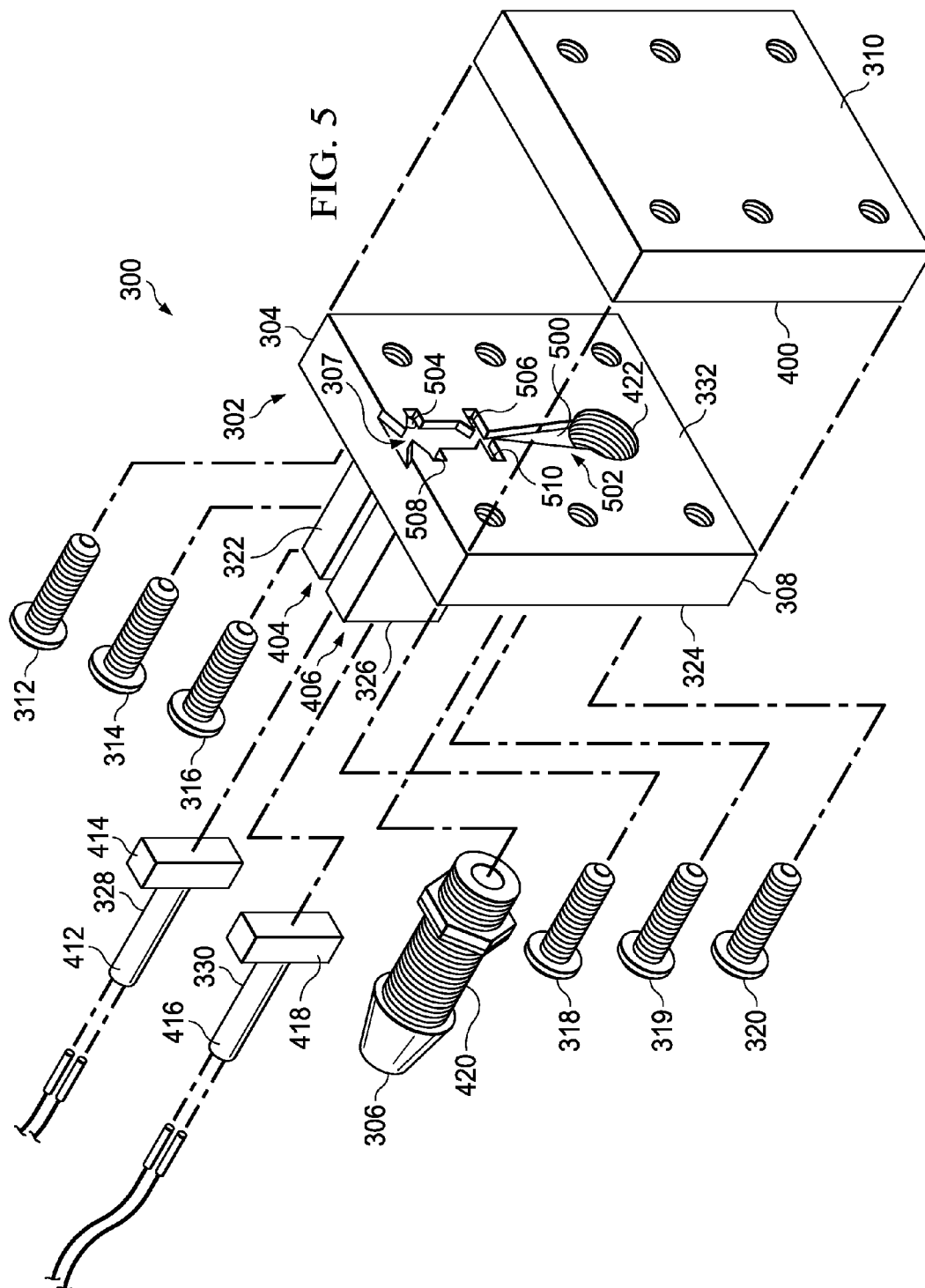


FIG. 2







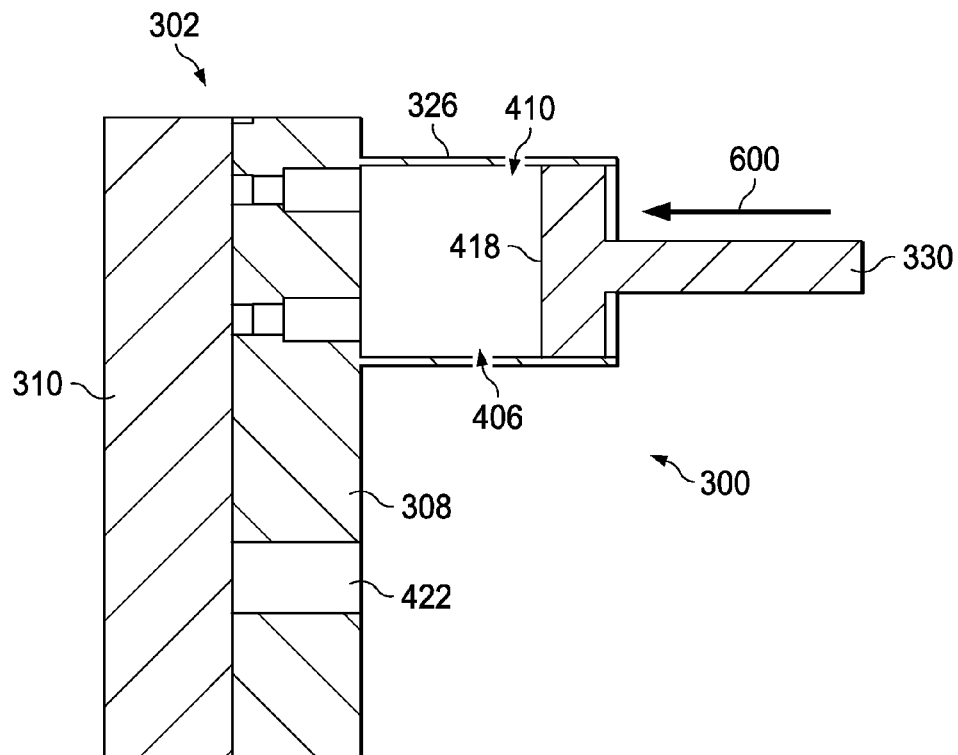


FIG. 6

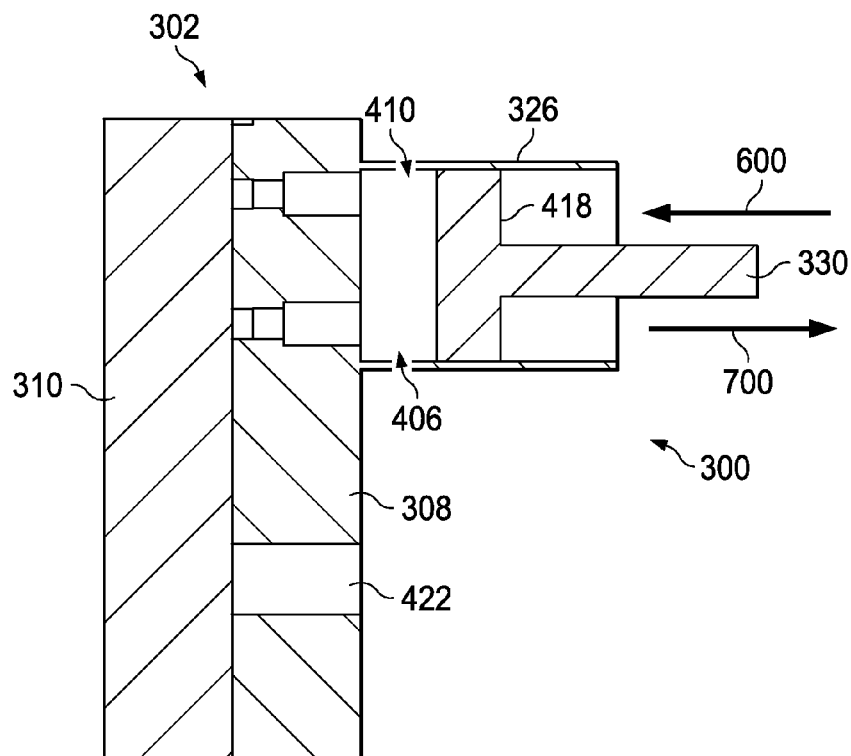


FIG. 7

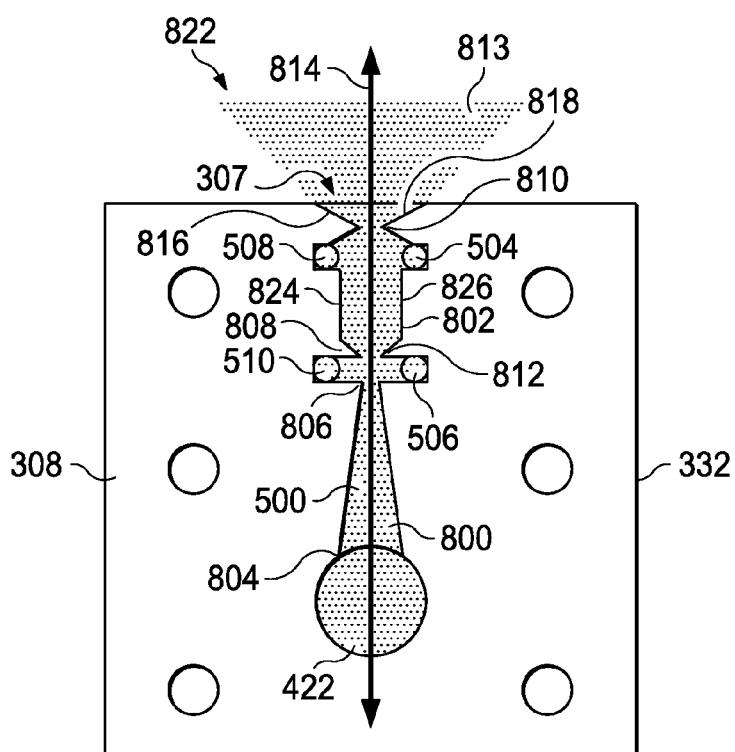


FIG. 8

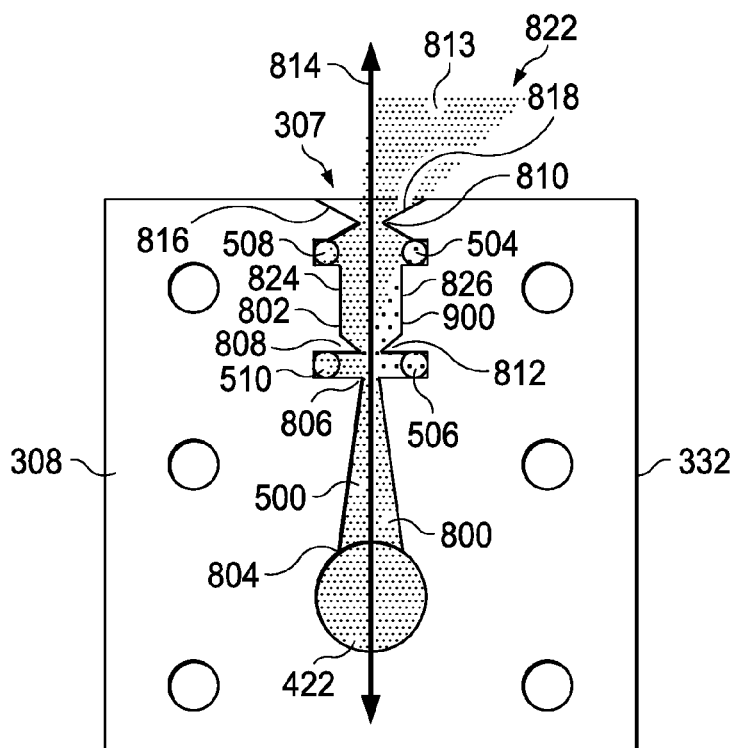


FIG. 9

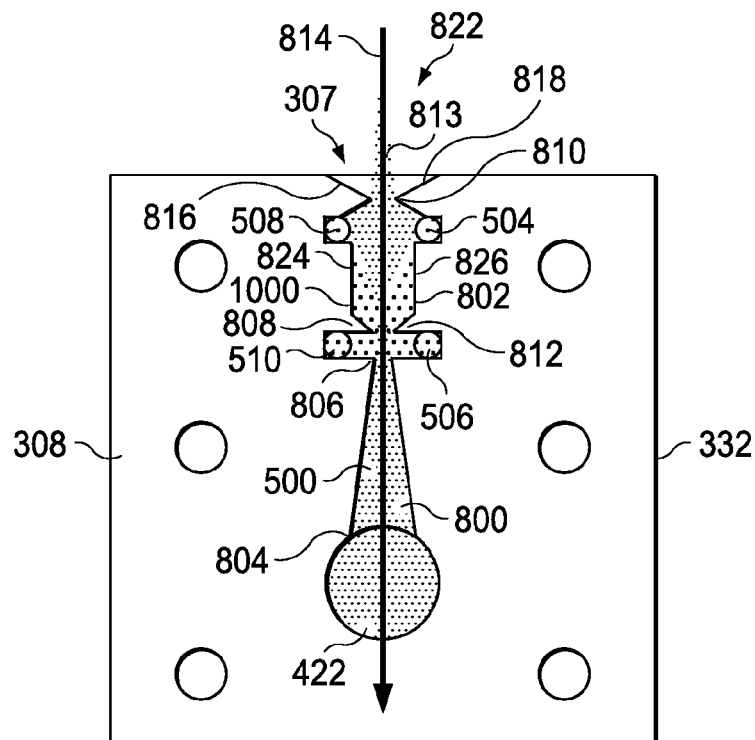


FIG. 10

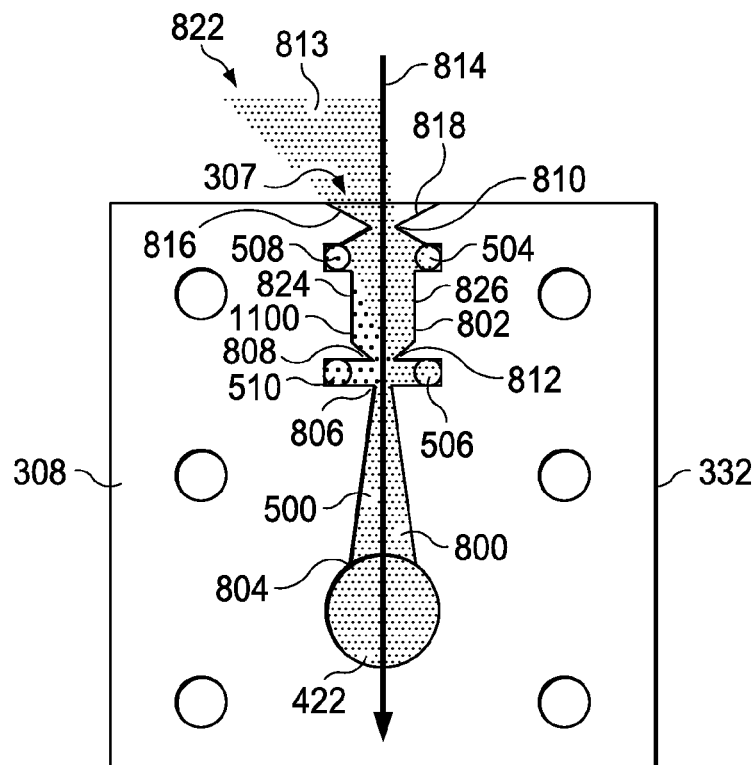
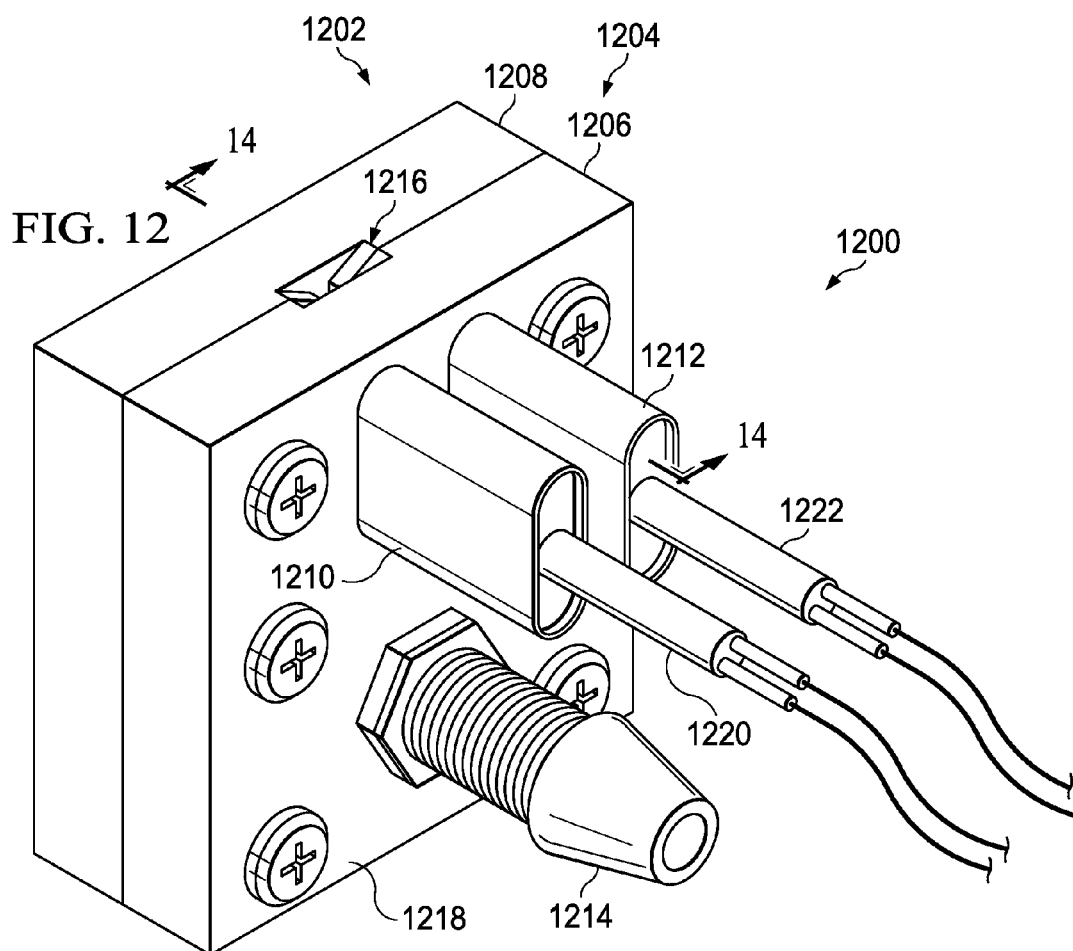
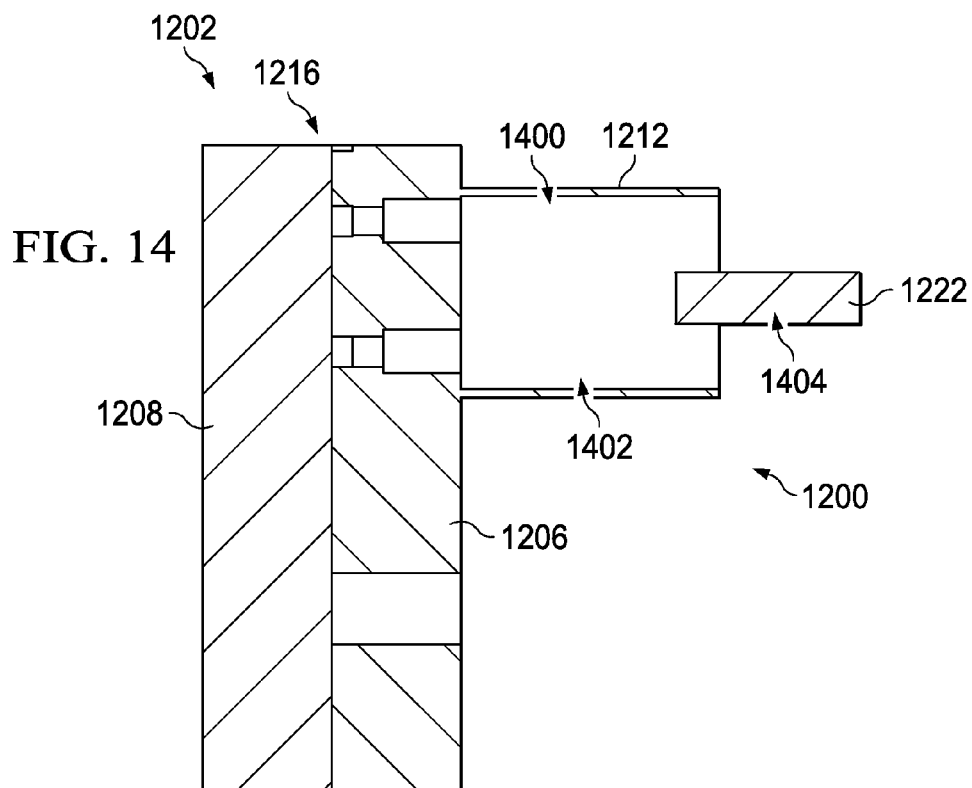
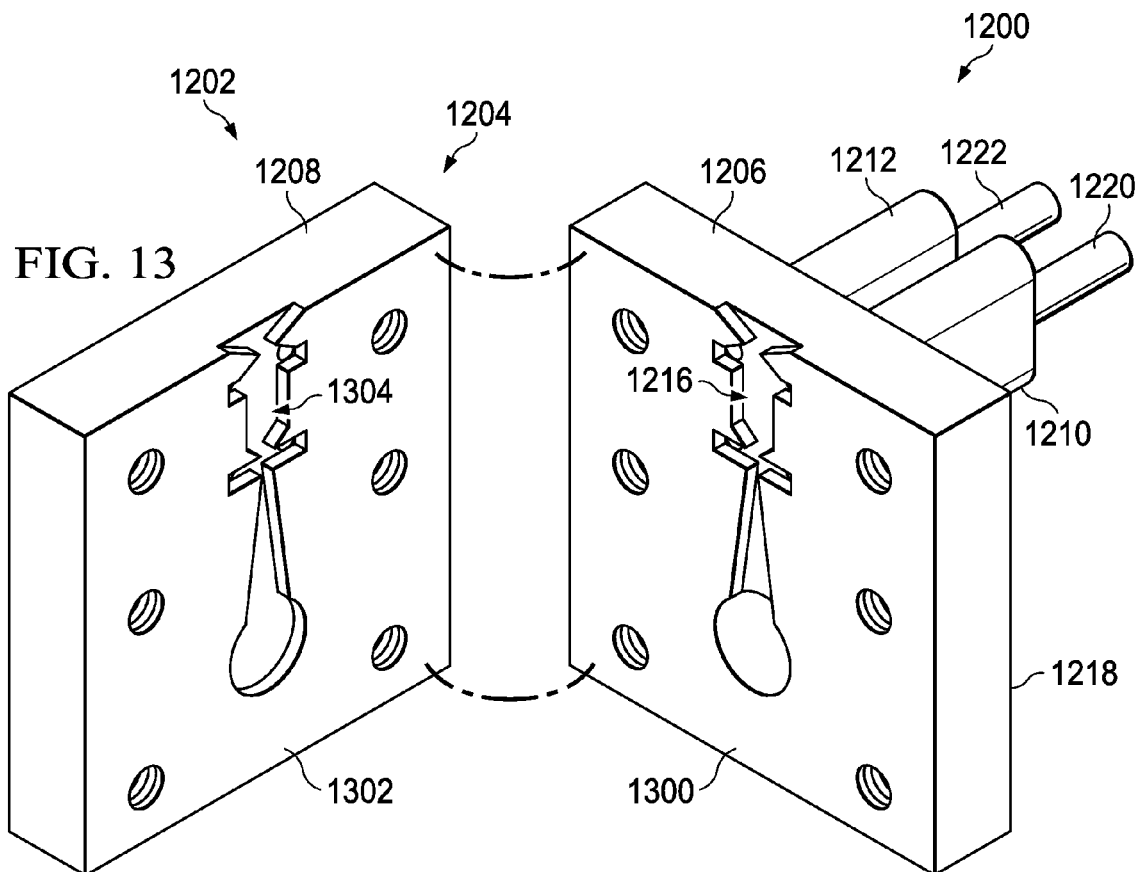


FIG. 11





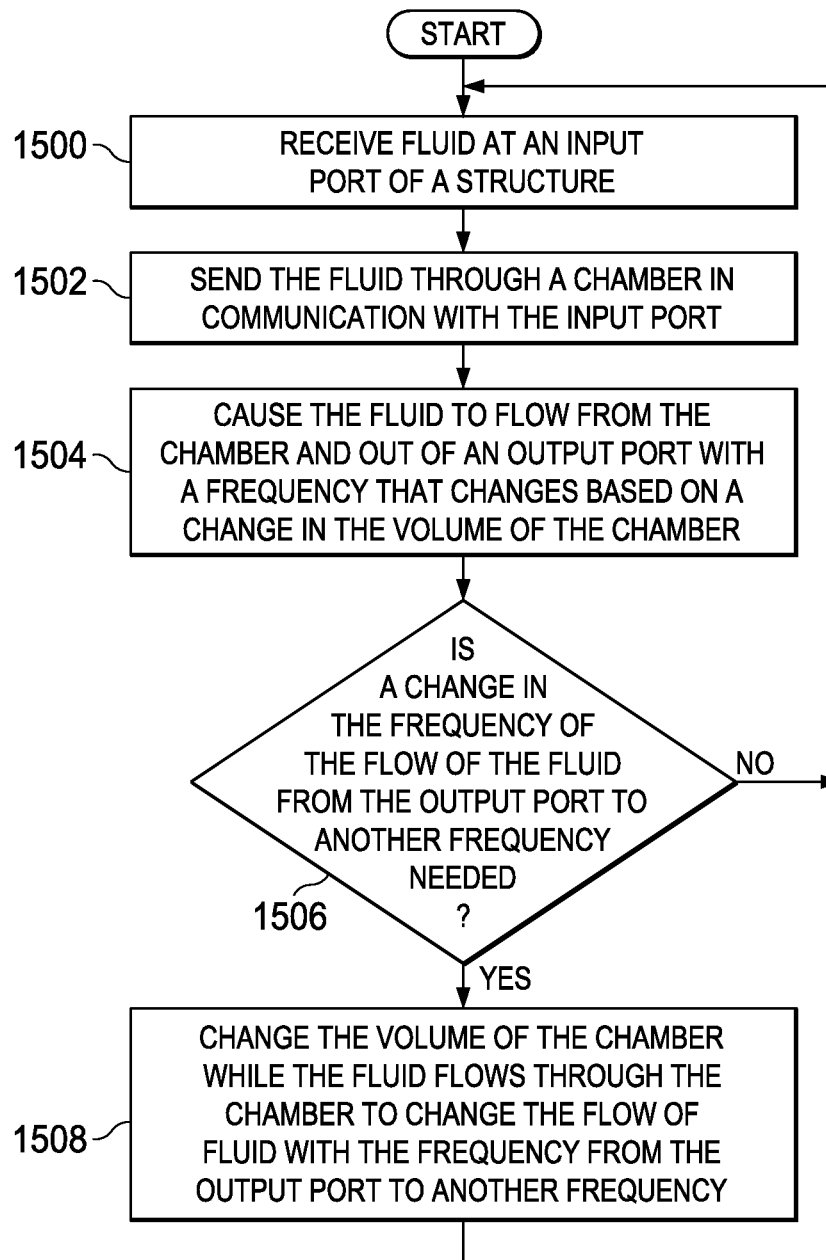
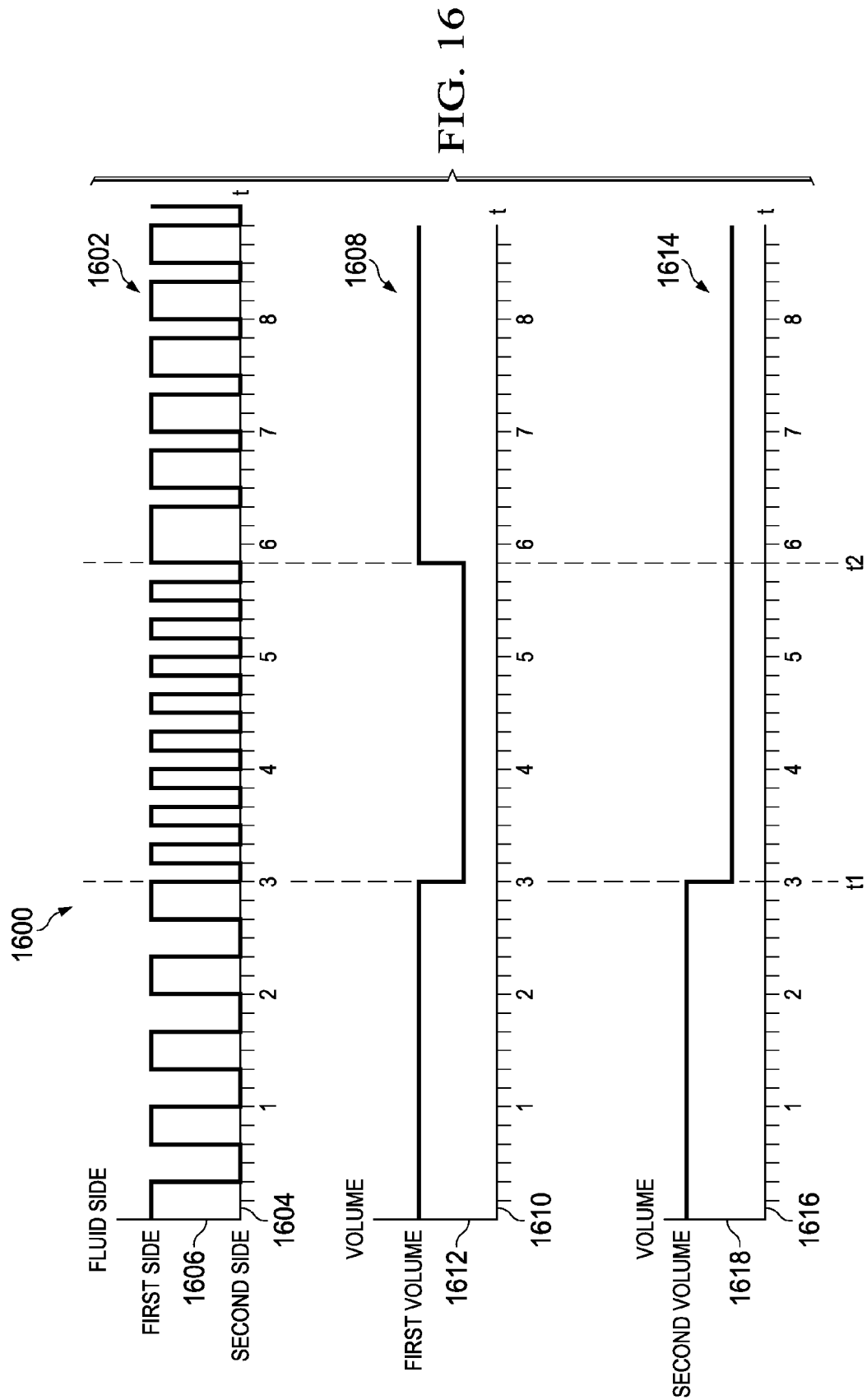


FIG. 15



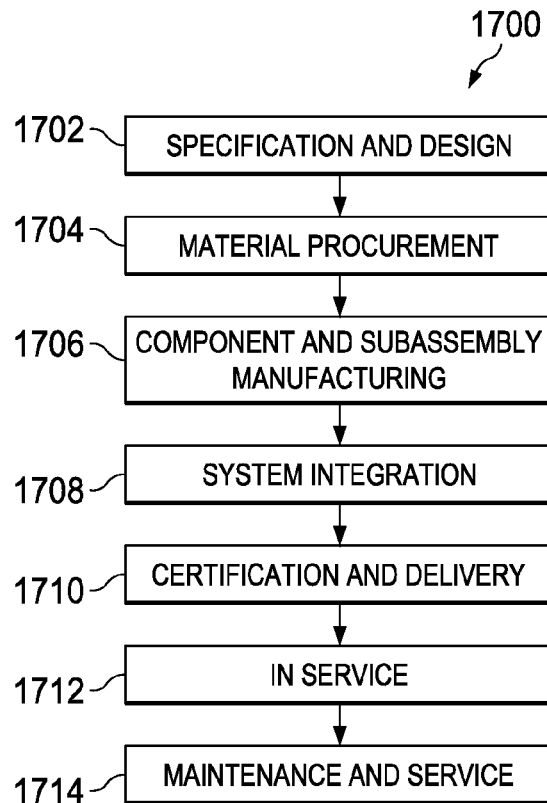


FIG. 17

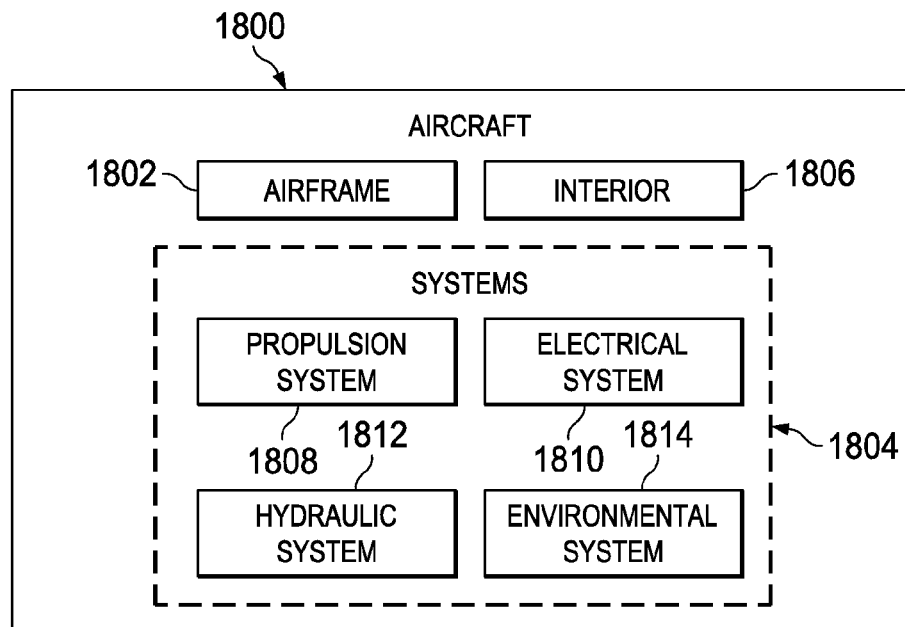


FIG. 18

1

FLOW CONTROL ACTUATOR WITH AN ADJUSTABLE FREQUENCY

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

This application is related to the following patent application: entitled "Externally Driven Flow Control Actuator", application Ser. No. 13/652,891, filed even date hereof, assigned to the same assignee, and incorporated herein by reference.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Field

The present disclosure relates generally to aircraft and, in particular, to fluid flow for an aircraft. Still more particularly, the present disclosure relates to a method and apparatus for controlling the aerodynamics of an aircraft using a flow control actuator having a variable frequency.

2. Background

In operating an aircraft, fluid flow control systems may be used for desired operation of the aircraft and the components within or on the aircraft. These fluid flow control systems may be used during different phases of operation of the aircraft. For example, these systems may be used during take-off, in flight, landing, taxiing on the runway, or during other phases of operation while the aircraft is in service. These fluid flow control systems may be used to control the flow of fluid over, in, or through various portions of an aircraft during these phases of operation.

Flow control actuators may be used in a fluid flow control system to maintain a desired flow of a fluid such as air. These flow control actuators may be used to maintain a desired flow of fluid in an aircraft for many different purposes. For example, flow control actuators may be used in jet inlet and exhaust systems, environmental systems, control surface systems, and other systems in an aircraft. Flow control actuators may be used to maintain desired boundary layers on control surfaces, to reduce noise, or to control fluid flow for other suitable purposes within the aircraft.

A currently used flow control actuator may take the form of a fluidic oscillator. This type of flow control actuator is designed to produce a flow of fluid moving in a sweeping manner from side to side at an output port of the flow control actuator. These oscillations of fluid flow occur at a particular frequency. The fluid flow output by a fluidic oscillator that moves in a sweeping manner may be referred to as a sweeping jet.

Changing the frequency of the flow of fluids sweeping from side to side to control fluid flow in a particular system may be desirable in some cases. This frequency may be changed to provide a desired fluid flow for a particular aircraft structure by changing the flow rate of fluid into the fluidic oscillators. Currently, the frequency of the flow of fluid out of a fluidic oscillator may be changed by replacing the fluidic oscillator with another fluidic oscillator. Replacement may be undesirable when dynamic control of fluid flow by the fluid flow system is desired.

Further, the frequency of oscillations in fluidic oscillators may be changed during operation of the fluidic oscillator by altering the supply pressure of the fluid to the fluid oscillator. However, in some cases, changing the fluid flow through the fluidic oscillator may not be desirable. For example, changing the fluid flow may use more energy than desired in the source of the fluid flow for the fluidic oscillator. In other cases, increased maintenance may be needed for the fluid source

2

supplying fluid to the fluidic oscillator. Therefore, it would be desirable to have a method and apparatus that takes into account at least some of the issues discussed above, as well as possibly other issues.

SUMMARY

In one illustrative embodiment, an apparatus comprises a structure and a chamber within the structure. The structure has an input port and an output port. The chamber is configured to channel a fluid from the input port to the output port of the structure. A volume of the chamber is configured to change such that a frequency at which the fluid flows out of the output port changes at the output port.

In another illustrative embodiment, a fluidic oscillator comprises a structure, a main chamber in the structure, a first secondary chamber in the structure, and a second secondary chamber in the structure. The structure has an input port and an output port. The main chamber in the structure is in communication with the input port and the output port. A fluid flowing from the input port through the main chamber flows between a first side and a second side of the main chamber. The first secondary chamber in the structure is in communication with the main chamber. The second secondary chamber in the structure is in communication with the main chamber. At least one of the first secondary chamber and the second secondary chamber is configured to change a volume of the main chamber such that a frequency at which the fluid sweeps at the output port changes.

In yet another illustrative embodiment, a method for managing a flow of fluid is present. The fluid is received at an input port of a structure. The fluid is sent through a chamber in communication with the input port. The fluid is caused to flow from the chamber and out of an output port with a frequency that changes based on a change in a volume of the chamber.

The features and functions can be achieved independently in various embodiments of the present disclosure or may be combined in yet other embodiments in which further details can be seen with reference to the following description and drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The novel features believed characteristic of the illustrative embodiments are set forth in the appended claims. The illustrative embodiments, however, as well as a preferred mode of use, further objectives and features thereof, will best be understood by reference to the following detailed description of an illustrative embodiment of the present disclosure when read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, wherein:

FIG. 1 is an illustration of an aircraft in accordance with an illustrative embodiment;

FIG. 2 is an illustration of a block diagram of a flow control actuator in accordance with an illustrative embodiment;

FIG. 3 is an illustration of a flow control actuator in accordance with an illustrative embodiment;

FIG. 4 is an exploded view of a flow control actuator in accordance with an illustrative embodiment;

FIG. 5 is another illustration of an exploded view of a flow control actuator in accordance with an illustrative embodiment;

FIG. 6 is an illustration of a cross-sectional view of a flow control actuator in accordance with an illustrative embodiment;

FIG. 7 is an illustration of a cross-sectional view of a flow control actuator in accordance with an illustrative embodiment;

FIG. 8 is an illustration of an inner side of a first planar member in a flow control actuator in accordance with an illustrative embodiment;

FIGS. 9-11 are illustrations of oscillations of fluid flow for a flow control actuator in accordance with an illustrative embodiment;

FIG. 12 is an illustration of a flow control actuator in accordance with an illustrative embodiment;

FIG. 13 is an illustration of a view of inner sides of planar members in a flow control actuator in accordance with an illustrative embodiment;

FIG. 14 is an illustration of a cross-sectional view of a flow control actuator in accordance with an illustrative embodiment;

FIG. 15 is an illustration of a flowchart of a process for managing flow of fluid in accordance with an illustrative embodiment;

FIG. 16 is an illustration of timing diagrams for a flow control actuator in accordance with an illustrative embodiment;

FIG. 17 is an illustration of an aircraft manufacturing and service method in accordance with an illustrative embodiment; and

FIG. 18 is an illustration of an aircraft in which an illustrative embodiment may be implemented.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The illustrative embodiments recognize and take into account one or more different considerations. For example, the illustrative embodiments recognize and take into account that changing the pressure in the input of the fluidic oscillator may only change the frequency by an amount that may not be sufficient for the desired frequency range.

Additionally, the illustrative embodiments also recognize and take into account that changing the pressure of the fluid supplied to the fluidic oscillator may also change the velocity, momentum, or both the velocity and the momentum of the fluid that flows out of the fluidic oscillator. This type of change in output also may be undesirable in some cases. Further, changing the pressure from a fluid source such as a bleed air supply or an auxiliary power unit to provide desired frequency in the fluidic oscillator may require the use of more energy than desired.

Thus, the illustrative embodiments provide a method and apparatus for controlling the fluid output from an apparatus such as a fluidic oscillator. The illustrative embodiments may be applied to any apparatus that generates fluid flow at an output port that changes frequency in the movement of the fluid flow that sweeps between a first side and a second side at the output port.

In one illustrative embodiment, an apparatus comprises a structure and a chamber within the structure. The structure has an input port and an output port. The chamber is configured to channel a fluid from the input port to the output port of the structure. A volume of the chamber is configured to change such that a frequency at which the fluid flow changes directions when flowing out of the output port changes.

In these illustrative examples, the frequency of the flow of fluid may be the rate, manner, or both the rate and manner of the fluid flow in a particular direction. This direction may be in a sweeping fashion from side to side. More specifically, the fluid may flow out of the output port in a stream that may move from side to side at a particular frequency. In other

words when the flow of fluid sweeps at the output port, the flow of fluid moves from side to side. The side to side movement may not actually touch the sides of the output port, depending on the implementation.

With reference now to the figures and, in particular, with reference to FIG. 1, an illustration of an aircraft is depicted in accordance with an illustrative embodiment. In this illustrative example, aircraft 100 has wing 102 and wing 104 attached to body 106. Aircraft 100 includes engine 108 attached to wing 102 and engine 110 attached to wing 104.

Body 106 has tail section 112. Horizontal stabilizer 114, horizontal stabilizer 116, and vertical stabilizer 118 are attached to tail section 112 of body 106.

Aircraft 100 is an example of an aircraft in which flow control actuators may be implemented to control the flow of fluid for aircraft 100. In particular, flow control actuators in the form of fluidic oscillators may be implemented in aircraft 100 to perform various functions such as maintaining a desired airflow. For example, fluid oscillators may be used to maintain desired airflow such as a boundary layer over wing 102, wing 104, horizontal stabilizer 114, horizontal stabilizer 116, and vertical stabilizer 118.

Further, fluid oscillators also may be employed to control surfaces such as flap 120 and flap 122. As another illustrative example, fluid oscillators may be used with engine 108 and engine 110 as well as other structures to reduce noise generated by aircraft 100.

Turning now to FIG. 2, an illustration of a block diagram of a flow control actuator is depicted in accordance with an illustrative embodiment. In this illustrative example, flow control actuator 200 may be used in aircraft 100 in FIG. 1.

As depicted, flow control actuator 200 may take the form of fluidic oscillator 202. In this illustrative example, flow control actuator 200 is comprised of structure 204 having input port 206 and output port 208. Additionally, chamber 210 is located within structure 204. In this illustrative example, chamber 210 is an enclosed space in structure 204. Structure 204 may be comprised of a material selected from one of a metal, plastic, steel, aluminum, titanium, polycarbonate, or other suitable types of materials.

As depicted, chamber 210 is configured to channel fluid 212 from input port 206 to output port 208 of structure 204. Fluid 212 may be, for example, without limitation, air, nitrogen, carbon dioxide, a liquid fuel, a gas fuel, or some other suitable type of fluid.

In this illustrative example, chamber 210 has volume 214. Volume 214 of chamber 210 is configured to change in size in these illustrative examples. The change in the size of volume 214 of chamber 210 is configured to change such that frequency 216 at which fluid 212 flows out from output port 208 changes at output port 208.

In this illustrative example, fluid 212 flows in the form of stream 218. Stream 218 sweeps with frequency 216. In these illustrative examples, stream 218 moves in a sweeping motion from side to side as depicted by arrow 219. In these illustrative examples, stream 218 may take the form of a jet stream of air.

In these illustrative examples, chamber 210 includes main chamber 220, first secondary chamber 222, and second secondary chamber 224. Main chamber 220 is in communication with input port 206 and output port 208. First secondary chamber 222 is in communication with main chamber 220. In a similar fashion, second secondary chamber 224 is also in communication with main chamber 220.

In these illustrative examples, first secondary chamber 222 has first volume 226 and second secondary chamber 224 has second volume 228. Main chamber 220 has primary volume

229. First volume 226, second volume 228, and primary volume 229 form volume 214.

In these illustrative examples, at least one of first secondary chamber 222 and second secondary chamber 224 is configured to change volume 214 for chamber 210. As used herein, the phrase “at least one of,” when used with a list of items, means different combinations of one or more of the listed items may be used and only one of each item in the list may be needed. For example, “at least one of item A, item B, and item C” may include, without limitation, item A or item A and item B. This example also may include item A, item B, and item C, or item B and item C. In other examples, “at least one of” may be, for example, without limitation, two of item A, one of item B, and ten of item C; four of item B and seven of item C; and other suitable combinations.

First volume 226 and second volume 228 are configured to be changed through a change in the configuration of first secondary chamber 222 and second secondary chamber 224. A change in first volume 226, second volume 228, or both first volume 226 and second volume 228 changes volume 214 for chamber 210.

As depicted, structure 204 includes first secondary structure 230 and second secondary structure 232. First secondary chamber 222 is located within first secondary structure 230. Second secondary chamber 224 is located within second secondary structure 232. First secondary structure 230 and second secondary structure 232 may be formed as part of structure 204 or may be otherwise associated with structure 204.

When one component is “associated” with another component, the association is a physical association in these depicted examples. For example, a first component may be considered to be associated with a second component by being secured to the second component, bonded to the second component, mounted to the second component, welded to the second component, fastened to the second component, and/or connected to the second component in some other suitable manner. The first component also may be connected to the second component using a third component. The first component may also be considered to be associated with the second component by being formed as part of and/or an extension of the second component.

Configuration changer 234 may change first secondary chamber 222 and second secondary chamber 224 to change volume 214 of structure 204. In particular, configuration changer 234 may change at least one of first volume 226 of first secondary chamber 222 and second volume 228 of second secondary chamber 224. In other words, these two volumes may be changed at the same time or at different times. Further, the two volumes may be changed by different amounts.

In this illustrative example, configuration changer 234 may change first volume 226 of first secondary chamber 222 and second volume 228 of second secondary chamber 224 in a number of different ways. For example, first volume 226 and second volume 228 may be changed using actuator system 240 in configuration changer 234. For example, actuator system 240 may move first member 236 and second member 238 to change first volume 226 and second volume 228. More specifically, first member 236 is associated with first secondary chamber 222, and second member 238 is associated with second secondary chamber 224.

As depicted, first member 236 and second member 238 may be moved in and out of first secondary chamber 222 and second secondary chamber 224, respectively. Movement of first member 236 into first secondary chamber 222 reduces

first volume 226. Similarly, movement of second member 238 into second secondary chamber 224 reduces second volume 228.

Movement of first member 236 out of first secondary chamber 222 increases first volume 226. In a similar fashion, movement of second member 238 out of second secondary chamber 224 increases second volume 228.

In other illustrative examples, first secondary structure 230 and second secondary structure 232 may change in configuration to change first volume 226 and second volume 228. For example, first secondary structure 230 and second secondary structure 232 may be comprised of a material that causes first secondary chamber 222 and second secondary chamber 224 to change in size, which causes a change to first volume 226 and second volume 228, respectively. For example, first secondary structure 230 and second secondary structure 232 may be comprised of material selected from at least one of shape memory material, an elastic material, and some other suitable type of material.

The illustration of flow control actuator 200 in FIG. 2 is not meant to imply physical or architectural limitations to the manner in which an illustrative embodiment may be implemented. Other components in addition to or in place of the ones illustrated may be used. Some components may be unnecessary. Also, the blocks are presented to illustrate some functional components. One or more of these blocks may be combined, divided, or combined and divided into different blocks when implemented in an illustrative embodiment.

For example, two additional secondary chambers may be used in addition to or in place of first secondary chamber 222 and second secondary chamber 224. These chambers also may change in configuration to change the volumes of those chambers to change volume 214 of chamber 210.

In this illustrative example, configuration changer 234 is shown as a separate component from flow control actuator 200. In some illustrative examples, configuration changer 234 may be considered part of flow control actuator 200.

In yet another illustrative example, configuration changer 234 may be implemented using a different component in addition to or in place of actuator system 240. In still other illustrative examples, configuration changer 234 may use a current source in place of actuator system 240. The current source may be used when first secondary structure 230 and second secondary structure 232 are comprised of a shape memory material. The current source may apply a current to change the configuration of first secondary structure 230 and second secondary structure 232 in a manner that changes first volume 226 of first secondary chamber 222 and second volume 228 of second secondary chamber 224.

Alternatively, configuration changer 234 may include a heat source when the shape memory material used for first secondary structure 230 and second secondary structure 232 change shape in response to temperature changes. As yet another illustrative example, configuration changer 234 may include clamps or vices that may squeeze first secondary structure 230 and second secondary structure 232 to reduce first volume 226 and second volume 228 when these structures are comprised of elastic materials. These clamps or vices may then open to increase first volume 226 and second volume 228.

In some illustrative examples, actuator system 240 may not be used, or may be used in combination with another type of configuration changer 234. For example, first volume 226 and second volume 228 may be configured to change using at least one of a piston, an actuator, a shape memory material, and an elastic material.

Turning now to FIG. 3, an illustration of a flow control actuator is depicted in accordance with an illustrative embodiment. Flow control actuator 300 is an example of one physical implementation of flow control actuator 200 shown in block form in FIG. 2. As depicted, flow control actuator 300 may be fluidic oscillator 302.

In this illustrative example, flow control actuator 300 is comprised of structure 304 having input port 306 and output port 307. Structure 304 is an example of an implementation of structure 204 shown in block form in FIG. 2. Input port 306 and output port 307 are examples of physical implementations for input port 206 and output port 208 shown in block form in FIG. 2.

As depicted in this particular example, structure 304 is comprised of more than one part. In particular, structure 304 is comprised of first planar member 308 and second planar member 310. These planar members may be connected to each other through fastener 312, fastener 314, fastener 316, fastener 318, fastener 319 (not shown), and fastener 320.

First secondary structure 322 extends from surface 324 of first planar member 308. Second secondary structure 326 also extends from surface 324 of first planar member 308. First secondary structure 322 and second secondary structure 326 are examples of physical implementations for first secondary structure 230 and second secondary structure 232 shown in block form in FIG. 2. In this illustrative example, first secondary structure 322 and second secondary structure 326 have a cross section with a shape of a rectangle.

In this illustrative example, first actuator 328 and second actuator 330 are associated with first secondary structure 322 and second secondary structure 326, respectively. First actuator 328 and second actuator 330 are examples of physical implementations for configuration changer 234 with actuator system 240 shown in block form in FIG. 2. First actuator 328 and second actuator 330 may be operated to change the volume in first secondary structure 322 and second secondary structure 326.

In this illustrative example, input port 306 extends from surface 324 of first planar member 308. Input port 306 is configured to be connected to a fluid source. For example, input port 306 may be connected to a bleed air source or an auxiliary power unit in these depicted examples.

As depicted, output port 307 is located on first planar member 308 on inner side 332 of structure 304. In this illustrative example, fluid flows out of output port 307 in a direction that moves with a selected frequency.

Turning now to FIG. 4, an exploded view of a flow control actuator is depicted in accordance with an illustrative embodiment. In this exploded view of flow control actuator 300, inner side 400 of second planar member 310 is shown. Inner side 400 may contact inner side 332 of first planar member 308 when first planar member 308 and second planar member 310 are connected to each other.

As depicted in this exploded view, first secondary structure 322 has first secondary chamber 404 and second secondary structure 326 has second secondary chamber 406. First secondary chamber 404 has first volume 408, and second secondary chamber 406 has second volume 410. As depicted, first volume 408 may be changed in size by first actuator 328. In a similar fashion, second volume 410 may be changed in size by second actuator 330.

In this illustrative example, first actuator 328 includes housing 412 and extendable section 414. In a similar fashion, second actuator 330 includes housing 416 and extendable section 418. The extendable sections may move relative to the housings. For example, movement of extendable section 414 relative to housing 412 may change the size of first volume

408 in first secondary chamber 404. Movement of extendable section 418 relative to housing 416 may change the size of second volume 410 in second secondary chamber 406.

Extendable section 414 and extendable section 418 have a shape and include a material configured to generate a seal when these sections extend into first secondary chamber 404 and second secondary chamber 406, respectively. The materials may include, for example, wear resistant material such as Polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE), a self-lubricating material such as a graphite embedded metal, and other suitable materials.

As depicted, input port 306 is comprised of connector 420 and opening 422. Connector 420 may be placed into opening 422 to form input port 306.

Turning now to FIG. 5, another illustration of an exploded view of a flow control actuator is depicted in accordance with an illustrative embodiment. In this exploded view of flow control actuator 300, main chamber 500 is seen on inner side 332 of first planar member 308. Main chamber 500 has volume 502 in this illustrative example.

As depicted, main chamber 500 is in communication with first secondary chamber 404 and second secondary chamber 406. In these illustrative examples, opening 504 and opening 506 provide communication between first secondary chamber 404 and main chamber 500. Opening 508 and opening 510 provide communication between second secondary chamber 406 and main chamber 500. In these illustrative examples, these openings may take the form of channels or holes that extend through first planar member 308. As can be seen in this exploded view, main chamber 500 is also in communication with opening 422 for input port 306 as well as output port 307.

With reference now to FIG. 6, an illustration of a cross-sectional view of a flow control actuator is depicted in accordance with an illustrative embodiment. As depicted, flow control actuator 300 is shown in a cross-sectional view taken along lines 6-6 in FIG. 3.

In this view, extendable section 418 for second actuator 330 is shown in an unextended state. Other components in second actuator 330, such as housing 416 and motors within housing 416, are not shown in this cross-sectional view. These components are not shown to illustrate the effect of extendable section 418 in a manner that does not obscure this illustration and description of the movement of extendable section 418.

As illustrated, second volume 410 for second secondary chamber 406 has the greatest size when extendable section 418 is in this unextended state. Movement of extendable section 418 into second secondary chamber 406 in the direction of arrow 600 reduces the size of second volume 410.

With reference now to FIG. 7, an illustration of a cross-sectional view of a flow control actuator is depicted in accordance with an illustrative embodiment. As depicted, flow control actuator 300 is shown in a cross-sectional view taken along lines 7-7 in FIG. 3.

In this illustrative example, extendable section 418 is shown in a partially extended state. In this view, extendable section 418 has been moved in the direction of arrow 600. With this movement of extendable section 418, second volume 410 in second secondary chamber 406 is reduced in size as compared to FIG. 6. In this manner, movement of extendable section 418 may be used to change second volume 410 for second secondary chamber 406.

This change of second volume 410 may occur during operation of flow control actuator 300. In other words, the change in second volume 410 may occur dynamically while fluid flows through flow control actuator 300. A similar

change may be made to first volume **408** for first secondary chamber **404** through movements of extendable section **414**.

Movement of extendable section **418** in the direction of arrow **700** increases second volume **410** from the current size in these illustrative examples. In this manner, at least one of first volume **408** and second volume **410** may be changed in size during operation of flow control actuator **300**. By changing at least one of first volume **408** in first secondary chamber **404** and second volume **410** in second secondary chamber **406**, the frequency at which fluid flowing from output port **307** changes direction may be adjusted. In these illustrative examples, the direction is a side to side movement of a stream of fluid.

With reference now to FIG. **8**, an illustration of an inner side of a first planar member in a flow control actuator is depicted in accordance with an illustrative embodiment. In this figure, inner side **332** of first planar member **308** from FIG. **3** is illustrated.

As can be seen in this illustrative example, first planar member **308** has main chamber **500**. Main chamber **500** includes first section **800** and second section **802**. First section **800** of main chamber **500** is in communication with opening **422** of input port **306** in FIG. **3** at first end **804** of first section **800**. First section **800** may be configured to receive fluid **813** from input port **306** and may cause fluid **813** to flow at a desired rate. Second end **806** of first section **800** is in communication with first end **808** of second section **802** of main chamber **500**. In this illustrative example, second end **810** of second section **802** is in communication with output port **307**.

As used herein, a first component, first end **804** of first section **800**, "connected to" a second component, second section **802**, means that the first component can be connected directly or indirectly to the second component. In other words, additional components may be present between the first component and the second component. The first component is considered to be indirectly connected to the second component when one or more additional components are present between the two components. When the first component is directly connected to the second component, no additional components are present between the two components.

In this illustrative example, second end **806** of first section **800** is connected to first end **808** of second section **802** by section **812**. Section **812** has a rectangular shape that is in communication with opening **506** and opening **510**.

Additionally, opening **504** and opening **508** also are located proximal to second end **810** of second section **802** in this illustrative example. The configuration of opening **504**, opening **506**, opening **508**, and opening **510** is such that fluid **813** flowing through main chamber **500** does not merely flow out of output port **307** in a direction about axis **814**. Instead, these openings are configured such that fluid flow out of output port **307** oscillates in a side to side fashion between first side **816** and second side **818** of output port **307** in this illustrative example.

Further, fluid **813** may flow out of output port **307** in a stream. This stream may have various forms, such as a jet, a cone, a fan shape, or some other suitable form.

As can be seen in this illustrative example, when fluid **813** flows out of flow control actuator **300** at output port **307**, fluid **813** may spread out to cover area **822**. As depicted, area **822** represents an extent of flow for fluid **813**.

The extent of area **822** outside of flow control actuator **300** may depend on the configuration of output port **307**. Output port **307** may be made such that area **822** may be wider or narrower, or have other configurations depending on the particular implementation.

In this illustrative example, second section **802** of main chamber **500** is configured to cause fluid **813** to oscillate between first side **824** of second section **802** and second side **826** of second section **802**. This oscillation between first side **824** and second side **826** is configured to cause an oscillation of fluid **813** as it exits flow control actuator **300** at output port **307**.

More specifically, some of fluid **813** flowing from first section **800** toward second section **802** of main chamber **500** may flow into first secondary chamber **404** through opening **506** in section **812**. This fluid may then flow back into second section **802** through opening **504**. This flow of fluid **813** through first secondary chamber **404** may affect the oscillation of fluid **813** through second section **802** of main chamber **500**.

In a similar fashion, some of fluid **813** flowing from first section **800** toward second section **802** of main chamber **500** may flow into second secondary chamber **406** through opening **510**. Further, the portion of fluid **813** that flows into second secondary chamber **406** may flow back into second section **802** through opening **508**. This flow of fluid **813** through second secondary chamber **406** may also contribute to the oscillation of fluid **813** in second section **802** of main chamber **500**.

In this manner, the portions of fluid **813** that flow through first secondary chamber **404** and second secondary chamber **406** may cause fluid **813** to oscillate within second section **802**, which in turn causes oscillation of fluid **813** when fluid **813** flows out of output port **307**. The frequency of this oscillation may be adjusted by adjusting first volume **408** in first secondary chamber **404** and second volume **410** in second secondary chamber **406**.

Further, fluid **813** flows between first side **824** and second side **826** in second section **802** of main chamber **500** at a frequency that may be changed. The amount of change selected in at least one of first volume **408** in first secondary chamber **404** and second volume **410** in second secondary chamber **406** may affect an amount of time that fluid **813** remains flowing on first side **824** and second side **826** in second section **802** of main chamber **500**.

Turning now to FIGS. **9-11**, illustrations of oscillations of fluid flow for a flow control actuator are depicted in accordance with an illustrative embodiment. In FIG. **9**, an illustration of fluid flow out of a flow control actuator is shown. In this illustration, fluid **813** flows through second section **802** such that fluid is present on first side **824** with an absence of fluid **813** on a portion of second side **826** in second section **802** of main chamber **500**. This flow of fluid **813** results in fluid **813** flowing out of output port **307** toward second side **826** with a flow of fluid **813** in area **900** on first side **824** being substantially absent.

In FIG. **10**, an illustration of a flow of fluid out of a flow control actuator is depicted in accordance with an illustrative embodiment. Within main chamber **500**, fluid **813** sweeps or moves to flow out of output port **307** from second side **826** toward first side **824**. Fluid **813** flowing within second section **802** of main chamber **500** flows mainly about axis **814** as the flow of fluid **813** shifts from flowing on first side **824** to second side **826**. Flow of fluid **813** is substantially absent in area **1000** in second section **802** of main chamber **500** in this example.

As depicted, fluid **813** flows out of output port **307** in a direction substantially along axis **814**. In this illustration, the flow of fluid **813** has moved toward second side **818** and is moving away from first side **816** of output port **307**.

Turning now to FIG. **11**, an illustration of a flow of fluid out of a flow control actuator is depicted in accordance with an

11

illustrative embodiment. In this depicted example, fluid **813** flows through second section **802** of main chamber **500** with fluid **813** being mostly against second side **826** rather than first side **824**. Fluid flow is substantially absent from area **1100** on first side **824** of second section **802** of main chamber **500** in these illustrative examples. This type of flow through second section **802** results in fluid **813** flowing out of output port **307** at second side **826** of output port **307**.

This shift in fluid flow may be caused by the communication of main chamber **500** with first secondary chamber **404** and second secondary chamber **406**. The rate of oscillation, or the frequency, may be based on the size of first volume **408** and second volume **410**. If first volume **408** is not the same size as second volume **410**, fluid **813** may flow on one side of output port **307** longer than another side of output port **307**.

Turning now to FIG. 12, an illustration of a flow control actuator is depicted in accordance with an illustrative embodiment. In this depicted example, flow control actuator **1200** takes the form of fluidic oscillator **1202**. Flow control actuator **1200** is an example of another physical implementation for flow control actuator **200** shown in block form in FIG. 2.

In this illustrative example, structure **1204** is comprised of first planar member **1206**, second planar member **1208**, first secondary structure **1210**, and second secondary structure **1212**. Structure **1204** has input port **1214** and output port **1216**.

In this illustrative example, input port **1214** extends from surface **1218** of first planar member **1206**. In this illustrative example, output port **1216** is not located just in first planar member **1206**. Output port **1216** is located in both first planar member **1206** and second planar member **1208** in this illustrative example. Additionally, first solenoid valve **1220** and second solenoid valve **1222** are associated with first secondary structure **1210** and second secondary structure **1212**, respectively.

Additionally, first secondary structure **1210** and second secondary structure **1212** have a different shape as compared to first secondary structure **322** and second secondary structure **326** in FIG. 3. First secondary structure **1210** and second secondary structure **1212** have a cross section that is more of an oval as opposed to a rectangle for first secondary structure **322** and second secondary structure **326** in FIG. 3.

Turning now to FIG. 13, an illustration of a view of inner sides of planar members in a flow control actuator is depicted in accordance with an illustrative embodiment. In this example, inner side **1300** for first planar member **1206** and inner side **1302** for second planar member **1208** are shown. In this illustrative example, chamber **1304** is formed in both inner side **1300** of first planar member **1206** and inner side **1302** of second planar member **1208**.

Turning now to FIG. 14, an illustration of a cross-sectional view of a flow control actuator is depicted in accordance with an illustrative embodiment. In this illustrative example, a cross-sectional view of flow control actuator **1200** is shown taken along lines **14-14** in FIG. 12.

As depicted, second secondary structure **1212** has secondary chamber **1400** with volume **1402**. Further, second solenoid valve **1222** may change the size of volume **1402**. When second solenoid valve **1222** is open, volume **1404** within second solenoid valve **1222** is in communication with volume **1402** of secondary chamber **1400**. In other words, volume **1404** in second solenoid valve **1222** is added to volume **1402** in secondary chamber **1400** of second secondary structure **1212** to increase the size of volume **1402**.

12

When second solenoid valve **1222** is closed, volume **1402** is reduced in size. In this state, volume **1404** in second solenoid valve **1222** is no longer in communication with volume **1402**.

The different components shown in FIG. 1 and FIGS. 3-14 may be combined with components in FIG. 2, used with components in FIG. 2, or a combination of the two. Additionally, some of the components in FIG. 1 and FIGS. 3-14 may be illustrative examples of how components shown in block form in FIG. 2 can be implemented as physical structures.

With reference now to FIG. 15, an illustration of a flowchart of a process for managing flow of fluid is depicted in accordance with an illustrative embodiment. The process illustrated in FIG. 15 may be implemented in flow control actuator **200** in FIG. 2. In particular, the process may be implemented using flow control actuator **200** in aircraft **100** in FIG. 1 or some other suitable type of platform.

The process begins by receiving fluid at an input port of a structure (operation **1500**). The process then sends the fluid through a chamber in communication with the input port (operation **1502**). The process then causes the fluid to flow from the chamber and out of an output port with a frequency that changes based on a change in the volume of the chamber (operation **1504**). A determination is made as to whether a change in the frequency of the flow of the fluid from the output port to another frequency is needed (operation **1506**). If a change is not needed, the process returns to operation **1500**. Otherwise, the process changes the volume of the chamber while the fluid flows through the chamber to change the flow of fluid with the frequency from the output port to another frequency (operation **1508**), with the process then returning to operation **1500**. These operations may occur until fluid flow is no longer desired from the structure.

The flowcharts and block diagrams in the different depicted embodiments illustrate the architecture, functionality, and operation of some possible implementations of apparatus and methods in an illustrative embodiment. In this regard, each block in the flowcharts or block diagrams may represent a module, segment, function, and/or a portion of an operation or step.

In some alternative implementations of an illustrative embodiment, the function or functions noted in the blocks may occur out of the order noted in the figures. For example, in some cases, two blocks shown in succession may be executed substantially concurrently, or the blocks may sometimes be performed in the reverse order, depending upon the functionality involved. Also, other blocks may be added in addition to the illustrated blocks in a flowchart or block diagram.

Turning now to FIG. 16, an illustration of timing diagrams for a flow control actuator is depicted in accordance with an illustrative embodiment. Timing diagrams **1600** are examples of timing diagrams that may be generated for flow control actuator **200** in FIG. 2. Timing diagram **1602** illustrates oscillations in the flow of fluid at output port **208** in FIG. 2. X-axis **1604** represents time, while Y-axis **1606** represents a side at which fluid flow occurs at output port **208**.

Timing diagram **1608** illustrates a change in first volume **226** in first secondary chamber **222**. X-axis **1610** represents time, while time Y-axis **1612** represents a size for first volume **226**.

Next, timing diagram **1614** illustrates a change in second volume **228** in second secondary chamber **224**. X-axis **1616** represents time, while time Y-axis **1618** represents a size for second volume **228**.

As can be seen in this illustrative example, first volume **226** and second volume **228** do not change until time **T1**. During

13

this period of time, the frequency of oscillation of the fluid flowing from output port **208** remains unchanged. When first volume **226** and second volume **228** are reduced at time **T1**, the frequency of the oscillation of the fluid flowing from output port **208** changes in a manner that increases the frequency at which the fluid flowing at output port **208** moves from side to side.

At time **T2**, the size of first volume **226** changes while the size of second volume **228** does not change. This change of first volume **226** results in the fluid flowing from output port **208** with a movement between the first side and the second side of output port **208** such that the fluid stays on the first side for a longer period of time than on the second side. When only one of first volume **226** and second volume **228** changes, the flow of fluid stays on the side corresponding to the chamber that has a larger volume for a longer period of time than the other side that has a smaller volume.

Illustrative embodiments of the disclosure may be described in the context of aircraft manufacturing and service method **1700** as shown in FIG. **17** and aircraft **1800** as shown in FIG. **18**. Turning first to FIG. **17**, an illustration of an aircraft manufacturing and service method is depicted in accordance with an illustrative embodiment. Flow control actuator **200** and the components found in flow control actuator **200** may be manufactured or reconfigured in the steps shown in this figure. During pre-production, aircraft manufacturing and service method **1700** may include specification and design **1702** of aircraft **1800** in FIG. **18** and material procurement **1704**.

During production, component and subassembly manufacturing **1706** and system integration **1708** of aircraft **1800** in FIG. **18** takes place. Thereafter, aircraft **1800** in FIG. **18** may go through certification and delivery **1710** in order to be placed in service **1712**. While in service **1712** by a customer, aircraft **1800** in FIG. **18** is scheduled for routine maintenance and service **1714**, which may include modification, reconfiguration, refurbishment, and other maintenance or service.

Each of the processes of aircraft manufacturing and service method **1700** may be performed or carried out by a system integrator, a third party, and/or an operator. In these examples, the operator may be a customer. For the purposes of this description, a system integrator may include, without limitation, any number of aircraft manufacturers and major-system subcontractors; a third party may include, without limitation, any number of vendors, subcontractors, and suppliers; and an operator may be an airline, a leasing company, a military entity, a service organization, and so on.

With reference now to FIG. **18**, an illustration of an aircraft is depicted in which an illustrative embodiment may be implemented. In this example, aircraft **1800** is produced by aircraft manufacturing and service method **1700** in FIG. **17** and may include airframe **1802** with plurality of systems **1804** and interior **1806**. Examples of systems **1804** include one or more of propulsion system **1808**, electrical system **1810**, hydraulic system **1812**, and environmental system **1814**. Any number of other systems may be included. Although an aerospace example is shown, different illustrative embodiments may be applied to other industries, such as the automotive industry.

Apparatuses and methods embodied herein may be employed during at least one of the stages of aircraft manufacturing and service method **1700** in FIG. **17**. For example, flow control actuators may be designed for use in aircraft **1800** during specification and design **1702**. The flow control actuators may be manufactured during component and subassembly manufacturing **1706** and installed during system integration **1708**. In these illustrative examples, the flow con-

14

trol actuators may be tested during certification and delivery **1710** and used to control the flow of fluids while in service **1712**. Additionally, flow control actuators may be added or replaced during maintenance, upgrades, or refurbishment in maintenance and service **1714**.

Thus, the illustrative embodiments provide a method and apparatus for controlling the flow of a fluid out of a flow control actuator. In the illustrative embodiments, the frequency at which fluid changes directions when flowing out of an output port in a flow control actuator may be changed. This frequency or sweeping of the fluid flow may be changed in a manner that does not require a change in the pressure of fluid input into the flow control actuator at an input port. In this manner, the amount of fuel or energy needed to operate a fluid source may be reduced. Further, by maintaining the flow of fluid at substantially the same level, changes in fluid flow may not occur that may affect the control being initiated using a fluid flow actuator.

The description of the different illustrative embodiments has been presented for purposes of illustration and description, and is not intended to be exhaustive or limited to the embodiments in the form disclosed. Many modifications and variations will be apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art.

Although the illustrative examples for an illustrative embodiment are described with respect to an aircraft, an illustrative embodiment may be applied to other types of platforms. The platform may be, for example, a mobile platform, a stationary platform, a land-based structure, an aquatic-based structure, and a space-based structure. More specifically, the platform may be a surface ship, a tank, a personnel carrier, a train, a spacecraft, a space station, a satellite, a submarine, an automobile, a power plant, a bridge, a dam, a manufacturing facility, a building, and other suitable objects.

Further, different illustrative embodiments may provide different features as compared to other illustrative embodiments. The embodiment or embodiments selected are chosen and described in order to best explain the principles of the embodiments, the practical application, and to enable others of ordinary skill in the art to understand the disclosure for various embodiments with various modifications as are suited to the particular use contemplated.

What is claimed is:

1. An apparatus comprising:

a structure comprising: to an opening and an output port, such that a central axis of the output port aligns with a diameter of the opening, the opening being directly connected to an input port and a main chamber;

a first planar member connected to a second planar member such that the connection forms the main chamber comprising: a first section connected to a second section via a rectangular section, a first side of the second section being substantially parallel to a second side of the second section;

the rectangular section connected to the second section: directly; and

via a first secondary chamber and a second secondary chamber, such that the rectangular section comprises a length substantially perpendicular to and symmetrical about the central axis, an opening to the first secondary chamber extends perpendicular to the length and through the first planar member from a first end of the length, and an opening to the second secondary chamber extends perpendicular to the length and through the first planar member from a second end of the length;

15

at least one of: a first volume of the first secondary chamber, and a second volume of the second secondary chamber, being variable such that a fluid flows, at a substantially constant pressure, into the opening, and out the output port in a sweeping motion comprising a variable frequency.

2. The apparatus of claim 1, such that the structure further comprises:

the first secondary chamber and the second secondary chamber being external to the first planar member;

a length of the first secondary chamber being substantially perpendicular to the length of the rectangular section; and

a length of the second secondary chamber being substantially perpendicular to the length of the rectangular section.

3. The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising:

the first secondary chamber being in communication with the main chamber through the opening to the first secondary chamber and a second opening to the first secondary chamber, and wherein the second secondary chamber is in communication with the main chamber through the opening to the second secondary chamber and a second opening to the second secondary chamber; and

the variable frequency comprises the sweeping motion of the fluid between a first side of the output port and a second side of the output port.

4. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the main chamber comprises:

the first section configured to receive the fluid, at the substantially constant pressure, from the input port and cause the fluid to flow at a desired rate when exiting the first section, such that, in operation, the first section receives the fluid, at the substantially constant pressure, from the input port and causes the fluid to flow at the desired rate when exiting the first section; and

the second section shaped such that the fluid alternates between flowing along the first side and the second side in the second section, and the output port being configured to cause the fluid flowing between the first side and second side in the second section to sweep with the frequency between a first side of the output port and a second side of the output port, such that, in operation, the output port causes the fluid flowing between the first side and second side in the second section to sweep with the frequency between the first side of the output port and the second side of the output port.

5. The apparatus of claim 4, wherein the first secondary chamber and the second secondary chamber are in communication with the second section of the main chamber, wherein at least one of the first secondary chamber and the second secondary chamber is configured to change the volume of the chamber.

6. The apparatus of claim 2 further comprising:

a first actuator configured to move into and out of the first secondary chamber to change the first volume in the first secondary chamber; and

a second actuator configured to move into and out of the second secondary chamber to change the second volume in the second secondary chamber.

7. The apparatus of claim 2, wherein an amount of change selected in at least one of the first secondary chamber and the second secondary chamber affects a first amount of time that the fluid flows on the first side of the second section and a second amount of time that the fluid flows on the second side of the second section.

16

8. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein each secondary chamber comprises at least one of: a shape memory material, and an elastic material.

9. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the structure is comprised of a material selected from one of a metal, a plastic, steel, aluminum, titanium, and polycarbonate.

10. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the fluid is selected from one of air, a liquid fuel, and a gas fuel, and a width of the first section, at a first end of the first section connected to the opening, being wider than a width of the first section at a second end of the first section that connects to the rectangular section.

11. A fluidic oscillator comprising:

a structure comprising first planar member and a second planar member connected to form a main chamber comprising:

an opening connected to an input port, and an output port;

a first section directly connected to the opening, and connected to a second section via a rectangular section; and

the second section comprising a first side substantially parallel to a second side, such that a fluid flows from the input port through the main chamber such that the fluid contacts the first side while a first absence of fluid exists on a portion of the second side, and alternately, the fluid contacts the second side while a second absence of fluid exists on a portion of the first side;

the rectangular section connected to the second section: directly; and

via a first secondary chamber and a second secondary chamber, and comprising a length being substantially perpendicular to and symmetrical about a central axis shared by: the first section, the second section, the output port, and a diameter of the opening, such that an opening to the first secondary chamber extends perpendicular to the length and through the first planar member from a first end of the length, and an opening to the second secondary chamber extends perpendicular to the length and through the first planar member from a second end of the length, a volume of the first secondary chamber, and a volume of the second secondary chamber, each being variable to control a flow of the fluid, that enters the opening at a constant pressure, through the second section and out the output port in a sweeping motion comprising a variable frequency.

12. The fluidic oscillator of claim 11, wherein at least one of: the first secondary chamber, and the second secondary chamber, is configured to change the volume of the main chamber, such that, in operation, at least one of: the first secondary chamber, and the second secondary chamber, changes the volume of the main chamber, wherein the volume of the main chamber is configured to change, via using at least one of: a shape memory metal, and an elastic material, such that the frequency at which the fluid sweeps at the output port changes, such that, in operation, the volume of the main chamber changes, via using at least one of: a shape memory metal, and an elastic material, such that the frequency at which the fluid sweeps at the output port changes.

13. A method for managing a flow of a fluid, the method comprising:

forming a structure comprising a chamber comprising a main chamber, a first secondary chamber, and a second secondary chamber, via:

17

connecting a first planar member to a second planar member and forming the main chamber comprising a first section and a second section, the second section comprising a first side being substantially parallel to a second side;

connecting the first section directly to a rectangular section directly connected to the second section, and connecting the rectangular section to the second section via the first secondary chamber and the second secondary chamber, such that the rectangular section comprises a length substantially perpendicular to and symmetrical about a central axis of an output port, the central axis being substantially parallel to the first side and the second side;

extending an opening, to the first secondary chamber, perpendicular to the length and through the first planar member, from a first end of the length;

extending an opening, to the second secondary chamber, perpendicular to the length and through the first planar member, from a second end of the length; and

extending the first secondary chamber and the second secondary chamber outward from the first planar member on a side of the first planar member farthest from the second planar member;

receiving the fluid, comprising a substantially constant pressure, at an input port of the structure;

sending the fluid through the chamber and adjusting a volume of the first secondary chamber and the second secondary chamber such the fluid contacts the first side of the second section while a first absence of fluid exists on a portion of the second side of the second section, and alternately, the fluid contacts the second side while a second absence of fluid exists on a portion of the first side, causing the fluid to flow from the second section and out of the output port in a sweeping motion comprising a frequency.

18

14. The method of claim 13 further comprising: changing the volume of the secondary chamber while the fluid flows through the chamber, thus changing the frequency to another frequency.

15. The method of claim 13, further comprising: the main chamber in communication with the input port and the output port and, wherein changing the volume of at least one of: the first secondary chamber, and the second secondary chamber, via activating a solenoid.

16. The method of claim 13, wherein changing the frequency at which the fluid flows out of the output port comprises changing the sweeping motion of the fluid between a first side of the output port and a second side of the output port.

17. The method of claim 15, further comprising: the first section causing the fluid to flow at a desired rate when exiting the first section; and the second section causing the fluid to move between a first side and a second side in the second section thus causing the fluid flowing between the first side and second side, in the second section, to exit the output port, sweeping with the frequency that is variable between: a first amount of time the flow spends on a first side of the output port, and a second amount of time the flow spends on a second side of the output port.

18. The method of claim 17, further comprising at least one of: the first secondary chamber, and the second secondary chamber, changing the volume of the chamber via moving at least one of:

- a first actuator in the first secondary chamber thus changing a first volume in the first secondary chamber thereby changing the volume of the chamber; and
- a second actuator associated with the second secondary chamber thus changing a second volume in the second secondary chamber thereby changing the volume of the chamber.

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